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9 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
11 SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION
12

13 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,) Case No. CR
14 Plaintiff,)
15 v.) DECLARATION OF SPECIAL AGENT MELISSA
16 GREGORY BRUCE ALLEN,) A. VANEK IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR
17 Defendant.) SUMMONS
)
)
)

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19 I, Melissa A. Vanek, hereby declare as follows:

20 1. I am a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and have been so
21 employed since August 2009. I am presently assigned to the Santa Rosa Resident Agency of the San
22 Francisco Division of the FBI. My current primary assignment is the investigation of violent crimes and
23 financial crimes. I have received training at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, including training
24 in violent crime, white collar crime, case management, and interviewing. Prior to my employment as a
25 Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I was an Intelligence Analyst with the Federal
26 Bureau of Investigation and was so employed for more than three years.

27 2. This affidavit is based in part on my personal knowledge, on my review of reports
28 prepared by other law enforcement officers, and on conversations I have had with other law enforcement

DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR SUMMONS
CR

1 officers, victims, and witnesses involved in this investigation. I obtained the information set forth in this
2 affidavit through interviews, public and law enforcement database checks, information received from
3 other law enforcement personnel, records received in response to grand jury subpoenas, and records
4 obtained during the investigation. Additionally, information contained in this affidavit is derived from
5 my training and experience as an FBI agent, and that of other FBI agents with whom I have discussed
6 this matter.

7 3. In approximately 2003, an individual named Gregory Bruce Allen opened a gym called
8 Fitness Boutique located at 33 Mary Street, San Rafael, California. Shortly thereafter, Allen hired
9 Person One as a personal trainer at Fitness Boutique, and Person One later became a business partner
10 with Allen. Allen told Person One that he had served in the United States Marine Corps, and, in late
11 2005 and early 2006, Allen began transitioning to a more military-style training program at Fitness
12 Boutique. Allen also started a military recruit training program for youths interested in military service.
13 Allen enlisted the assistance of Person One in purchasing military memorabilia, including medals and
14 uniforms, from military catalogues such as Sergeant Grit. When Person One asked Allen why he was
15 purchasing medals and uniforms from catalogues, Allen claimed that he had lost all of his United States
16 Marine Corps memorabilia, including a Purple Heart, during a fire or flood at a storage facility.

17 4. In 2009 or 2010, Allen unofficially changed the name of the gym from Fitness Boutique
18 to House of Steel. Then, on September 8, 2011, Allen filed a Fictitious Business Name Statement with
19 the County of Marin Office of the County Clerk. On the statement, Allen listed his Fictitious Business
20 Name as House of Steel located at 33 Mary Street, San Rafael, California. Allen was the only listed
21 registrant/officer on the Fictitious Business Name Statement.

22 5. According to Person One, Allen designated House of Steel as a donation drop-off
23 location for Triple H, also known as Helping Heroes from Home. According to Triple H's website,
24 Allen claimed to be a 1st Lieutenant with the United States Marine Corps who served in the Vietnam
25 War and Gulf War. The contact information listed for Triple H was House of Steel, Operation Triple H,
26 Thomas Burford or 1st Lieutenant Greg Allen, 33 Mary Street, San Rafael, California. Additionally, in
27 2010, Allen also began hosting House of Steel Annual Fundraisers to raise money for Allen's military
28 recruit training program and Triple H.

1 6. According to fundraising fliers obtained during the investigation, House of Steel Annual
2 Fundraisers were held on October 6, 2012, October 19, 2013, and November 15, 2014. In 2012, the cost
3 to attend the fundraiser was \$25. In 2013 and 2014, the cost to attend the fundraiser was \$40. The
4 fundraisers included an auction and a raffle, in addition to dinner, music, and dancing. According to
5 Person Two, an attendee at the fundraiser held on October 19, 2013, Allen wore a United States Marine
6 Corps uniform with a Lieutenant insignia and several ribbons to the fundraiser. Allen told Person Two
7 that he had been awarded a Purple Heart and had earned a battlefield commission while serving in the
8 Vietnam War. In addition to purchasing a \$40 ticket to the fundraiser, Person Two used a credit card to
9 purchase \$600 worth of items auctioned off during the fundraiser. Person Two attended the fundraiser
10 and purchased items at the fundraiser based on Person Two's belief that Allen had served in the United
11 States Marine Corps and had been awarded a Purple Heart.

12 7. Person Three also attended several of the House of Steel Annual Fundraisers. According
13 to Person Three, Allen wore a United States Marine Corps uniform to all of the fundraisers that Person
14 Three attended. Allen told Person Three that he had served in the United States Marine Corps and had
15 been awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. According to Person Three's records, in 2010, Person
16 Three wrote a personal check for \$100 made payable to Triple H, along with two personal checks for
17 \$100 and \$200 made payable to Allen. All of these checks represented donations that Person Three
18 made to Allen and Allen's House of Steel fundraising entity, based on Person Three's belief that Allen
19 was a decorated veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

20 8. According to Person Three, Allen was a member, and at times the elected president, of
21 the Marin County Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, of which Person Three was
22 also a member. Allen was granted membership based on Allen's assertion that he had been a 1st
23 Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. On June 27, 2014, the Marin County Chapter of the
24 Military Officers Association of America wrote a business check for \$500 made payable to House of
25 Steel. On September 5, 2014, the Marin County Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America
26 wrote a second business check for \$300 made payable to House of Steel. According to Person Three,
27 these checks represented donations made to support Allen's military recruit training program, based on
28 Allen's membership in the Military Officers Association of America.

1 9. Person Four, a friend of Person Three, also donated money to Allen's House of Steel
2 fundraising entity. On October 19, 2013, Person Four wrote a personal check for \$160 made payable to
3 Triple H. On October 21, 2013, Person Four wrote a personal check for \$200 also made payable to
4 Triple H.

5 10. All of the aforementioned checks were deposited into one of three bank accounts held at
6 California Bank and Trust: account number ending in 1433 held in the name of House of Steel, account
7 number ending in 2375 held in the name of Triple H, and account number ending in 2684 held in the
8 name of Gregory B. Allen. Allen is listed as an owner/signer on all of the accounts. According to
9 analysis of the bank accounts, from June 10, 2013, to May 1, 2015, approximately \$23,000 in donated
10 checks was deposited into the aforementioned accounts. The funds were determined to be donations
11 based on the statements included in the memo sections of the deposited checks. The majority of the
12 funds were deposited into the account held under the name Triple H. For the funds deposited into the
13 Triple H account, approximately \$2,400 was used by Allen to pay bills, approximately \$2,200 was
14 withdrawn from the account as cash, and approximately \$7,600 was withdrawn as checks made payable
15 to Allen or House of Steel. For all of the accounts, there were minimal debits made to charitable
16 organizations. Based on numerous interviews with individuals who made donations to Allen, Allen's
17 House of Steel fundraising entity, or Triple H, the donations were made based on Allen's claim that he
18 was using his expertise as a decorated United States Marine Corps veteran to train and prepare youths
19 for military service.

20 11. Several photographs depicting Allen wearing a United States Marine Corps uniform with
21 various ribbons, to include ribbons for the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, have been obtained as part
22 of the investigation. Some of the photographs have been attached to and made part of this affidavit.
23 Photograph #1 depicts Allen in a United States Marine Corps uniform with ribbons for the Purple Heart
24 (with a star denoting more than one award) and the Bronze Star (with a "V" device to denote heroism in
25 combat). This photograph was taken during an event held on POW/MIA Day in September 2013.
26 Photograph #2 depicts Allen in a United States Marine Corps uniform with ribbons for the Purple Heart
27 (with a star denoting more than one award) and the Bronze Star (with a "V" device to denote heroism in
28 combat). This photograph was also taken during an event held on POW/MIA Day in September 2013.

1 Photograph #3 depicts Allen in a United States Marine Corps uniform with ribbons for the Purple Heart
2 (with a star denoting more than one award) and the Bronze Star (with a "V" device to denote heroism in
3 combat). This photograph was taken during an event held on Veterans Day in 2014. Photograph #4
4 depicts Allen in a United States Marine Corps uniform with ribbons for the Purple Heart (with a star
5 denoting more than one award) and the Bronze Star (with a "V" device to denote heroism in combat).
6 This photograph was taken during the Vietnamese Veterans Remembrance Day held on April 26, 2014.
7 Photograph #5 depicts Allen in a United States Marine Corps uniform with ribbons for the Purple Heart
8 (with a star denoting more than one award) and the Bronze Star (with a "V" device to denote heroism in
9 combat). This photograph was also taken during the Vietnamese Veterans Remembrance Day held on
10 April 26, 2014.

11 12. According to military records obtained from the National Archives and Records
12 Administration, Allen enlisted in the United States Navy on September 9, 1968. Allen was honorably
13 discharged from the United States Navy approximately eight months later, on May 16, 1969. Allen was
14 discharged due to a previously unreported knee injury for which Allen refused medical treatment. In
15 connection with his discharge, Allen signed a statement explaining that a recent religious conversion
16 prevented him from accepting medical treatment. The only commendation that Allen received during
17 his service was the National Defense Service Medal.

18 13. Person Five, a Sergeant Major with the United States Marine Corps Recruiting Station in
19 San Francisco, California, reviewed databases for the United States Marine Corps recruiting depots and
20 determined that there is no record of Allen having processed through any of the United States Marine
21 Corps recruiting depots. Additionally, Person Five reviewed archives for combat medals conferred by
22 the United States Marine Corps. There is no record of Allen having received a Purple Heart.

23 14. Additionally, a Special Agent with the Office of the Inspector General, United States
24 Department of Veterans Affairs, reviewed Veterans Affairs databases, which showed that there is no
25 record of Allen having ever served in the United States Marine Corps. However, the Veterans Affairs
26 records did indicate that Allen had served in the United States Navy, but there was no record of Allen
27 having been awarded a Purple Heart. If Allen had been awarded a Purple Heart, then Allen would have a
28 service connected injury and would be eligible to receive medical coverage through the Veterans Affairs

1 healthcare system. According to the Veterans Affairs databases, Allen is currently receiving zero service
2 connected benefits.

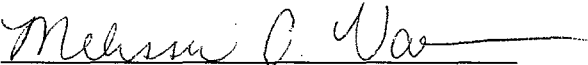
3 15. In summary, Allen knowingly purchased ribbons for the Purple Heart and fraudulently
4 held himself out to be a recipient of the Purple Heart with the intent to obtain money and other tangible
5 benefits from individuals who attended the House of Steel Annual Fundraisers and donated money to
6 Triple H and Allen's military recruit training program, all in violation of Title 18 U.S.C. Section 704 –
7 Military Medals and Decorations.

8 16. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my
9 knowledge and belief.

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11 Executed March 2016, at San Francisco, California.

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13 DATED: March 15, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

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16 Melissa A. Vanek
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